

Dandelion by trashycatarcade

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Summary:

Sometimes Billy would just curl up next to Steve in bed at night and have to cry about how big Abby was getting. Steve would rub his back, comforting his partner as best as he could. Billy was aware that he was being dramatic, but his little girl was growing up way too fast. He felt like he was going to blink and then she'd be gone, old enough not to need her dads anymore.

Dandelion

Author's Note:

Hi hello, just gonna reiterate that this fic is just very mushy!! Dads!harringrove basically owns my entire heart and I just wanted to write about them adopting a daughter together :)

Billy never thought that he would become a dad. Besides believing that it wouldn't be possible for a person like him, he also was scared shitless. He'd seen first hand what happens when the wrong kind of person became a parent, he knew how screwed up things could get. He had this huge fear that he would ruin a kid's life. And even though Steve had assured him countless times that Billy would be a fantastic dad if they were to have a kid, he also accepted that Billy wasn't ready for fatherhood and he may never be. So Steve never pushed the idea.

Then Max had a baby.

Out of the pair, no one expected Billy would be the one hit with baby fever.

Max was only able to get three weeks of leave from her work, so Billy volunteered to help out with little Julien. Julien was precious: He slept for long hours and rarely cried, he loved playing peek-a-boo and was easily entertained by crinkly paper, and when he got especially fussy, all Billy had to do was put him in his swing and Julien would knock right out.

Billy would come home from Max and Lucas' and gush to Steve about whatever him and Julien got up to that day. It was usually the same

sort of stuff, babies don't really do that much, but Steve would listen fondly to Billy's report while they cooked dinner together. Eventually Max found a sitter and changed her work hours, so Billy didn't spend as much time with the runt.

A few years passed and Billy mentioned having kids of their own. Steve and him were in bed, the light on the nightstand casting enough light for Billy to read but not too much that Steve couldn't doze off.

"Steve." Billy ruffled Steve's hair gently, letting his hand wander down to rub his back. Steve blinked over at him sleepily, his eyes a little unfocused without his glasses.

"What's wrong?" He asked, frowning.

"No, nothing's wrong. I just... I've been thinking lately, maybe we could look into adoption?" Billy wrung his hands together nervously. When Steve didn't answer immediately, Billy interjected, "Only if you want to, of course! Fuck, nevermind. It's stupid, I shouldn't have even brought it up."

Billy picked his book up, not able to look back at his partner. Steve hadn't seen him this nervous since Billy had asked him to marry him. This conversation caught Steve off guard- and not only because he was half asleep. They'd talked about kids before when they were freshly married (technically unofficially, but whatever), Billy said he didn't think he'd ever want to go down that path. And now, Billy was bringing it up.

“Babe, it’s not stupid.” Steve said seriously. “I want to do that with you.”

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Adoption for two gay men in 2000 wasn’t easy. They were basically at the bottom of the ‘list’ of candidates and they’d been through multiple near adoptions that eventually fell through in just the past two years. Steve was beginning to lose hope, but Billy stayed determined. He called the adoption agency every week and he stopped by in person once a month. Steve told him he was probably bothering the agency, he said that they had their application and when the right kid came along, everything would work out. Billy’s perspective wasn’t quite as rose-colored as Steve’s: He realized that the agency didn’t want a same-sex couple adopting a baby. They may not outright say it, but he could tell. Billy wanted to show them that they were just as serious as any other couple.

In November of 2001, they got the call from the agency. The weekend before they brought their daughter home, Billy and Steve prepared the second bedroom for their new addition. Steve excitedly put up a fresh coat of paint while Billy struggled through assembling furniture for the bedroom. When they finished, they stood side by side in the doorway, misty eyed and excited for their daughter’s homecoming.

“We’re going to be parents.” Steve sighed, he let his head fall to Billy’s shoulder.

“Fuck, I’m so scared.” Billy admitted. He took a deep breath and tried to ease the panic creeping in. Steve gently wrapped his arms around him, pulling Billy in to hold him. Billy sagged into the hug.

“I am too, but I know it’s gonna be okay.” Steve said.

“How could you know that though?” Billy asked fearfully. So many things could go wrong, what if this was a mistake? Steve tightened his arms around Billy and leaned them against the doorframe.

“Because I know you. I’ve seen you grow into the man you are today and I know you’re going to be an amazing dad.”

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Billy knew that for every developmental milestone that Abby passed, he should be excited. Don’t get him wrong, he was beyond happy to see his daughter growing and becoming a little person... but he also got sad? Abby was growing up so fast, one day she was crawling around on the carpet and the next she was racing around the apartment wreaking havoc. It felt like only a few days ago she drooled and needed to be spoon fed, now she was talking in barely formed sentences. Sometimes Billy would just curl up next to Steve in bed at night and have to cry about how big Abby was getting. Steve would rub his back, comforting his partner as best as he could. These breakdowns started happening more frequently as Abby’s 2nd birthday got nearer and nearer. Billy was aware that he was being dramatic, but his little girl was growing up way too fast and he felt like he was going to blink and then she’d be gone, old enough not to need her dads anymore.

“Billy, stop worrying about the future, Abby’s barely two! You have got to just live for today.” Max scolded him during one of Abby’s and Julien’s playdates after he had opened up to her. It was a sunny June

day and Julien was happily keeping Abby occupied on a blanket in Lucas and Max's yard. Lucas had been called out of town for a work emergency and Steve had gotten stuck covering a late shift. The step-siblings watched the kids from the porch, periodically bringing out new toys and snacks.

"Yeah, that's what Steve keeps telling me. That's what everyone keeps telling me, shitbird." Billy huffed, rolling his eyes. "I can't help it!"

"Listen to me, I felt the same way. Every time I had to go into work, every time I left Julien with you or Lucas, or the babysitter, I was so afraid that I was missing out on his childhood. Even when I was with him, all I could think about was how I could never get this moment back. But it's useless to think that way! I realized that I couldn't stop time from passing so I needed to enjoy it while it lasted!" Max insisted. She grabbed his hand and gave it a reassuring squeeze. Billy squeezed back. Even though Max was younger than him, he appreciated the wisdom she occasionally provided. He was happy that their days of fighting and heated arguing were left behind at the house on Cherry Lane.

Billy looked out at the yard, he watched the way Abby would giggle when Julien ran circles around her with his toy airplane. She made grabby hands at him and squealed, "My turn!" Julien passed the toy plane to her and she zoomed it around. Max gave his shoulder a hard pat and announced that she was going to get food ready. Billy walked over to the rainbow blanket and sat down beside the duo.

"Daddy attack!" Abby jumped up, discarding the airplane to wrap her arms around his shoulders and climb onto his back. He held onto her chubby little legs and she laughed into his ear. He tried not to dwell on the future, let himself enjoy the moment. "Down." Abby instructed

him and he helped her back to the ground. She plucked a nearby dandelion from the ground and held it to Billy triumphantly. "Present for you."

"Thank you baby, I love it." He smiled at her, taking the dandelion. She beamed at him, clearly happy that her gift was well received. He tucked the yellow flower into the breast pocket of his shirt. Julien came bounding up to them excitedly, hiding something behind his back.

"I have a present for you too, Uncle Billy!" Julien grinned and offered him a wiggling pink worm clasped between his fingers. Billy chuckled and took the worm and Julien bounded off - probably to find more worms.

Abby went back to playing with the airplane and some of Julien's matchbox cars. She pretended that Billy's arm was the road and rolled the cars over it, back and forth. Every so often, she would show Billy a new car, telling him which color it was or if she liked it or not. Steve had been working on colors with her a lot recently, and Abby had gotten into the habit of pointing out the colors of things frequently. It was really adorable and she always looked proud when she got the color right. And when Billy would catch those intrusive thoughts about the future, he gave it his all not to dwell on them and instead focus on Abby rolling her car over his arm. Max rejoined them with a big plate of fruit and sandwiches to share for an early dinner, calling Julien over to eat.

Before Billy knew it, a few hours had passed and the sun was beginning to set. He helped Max bring all the toys back in the house and the kids savored the last few minutes of light while they cleaned up. Billy caught a glimpse of the clock on his trip inside; It was nearing 7pm and Steve would be arriving soon to pick them up. Billy

and Max tried to coax the kids inside with the promise of a movie, but Julien had other ideas.

“Five more minutes? Please? Momma, I wanna see the fireflies!” Julien tugged at Max’s pant legs, giving her his best puppy dog eyes. “I promise I’ll be good for bedtime!” For a five year old, Julien was quite the negotiator. Of course Max caved which meant that Abby also got to chase the growing number of fireflies blinking around the yard. Billy couldn’t help but grin watching the cousins running around- and periodically jumping up- to try and catch the glowing bugs. After struggling to jump high enough to reach any of the fireflies, Abby pouted at Billy.

“Hold me?” She asked and how could Billy say no? He lifted her up in the air and she swung her little hands around, attempting to catch at least one bug. Billy could tell that she was getting frustrated when each time she came back fruitless. Abby got distracted by Julien showing Max all of the bugs he had captured, a faint green-ish yellow glow coming from his closed fists. “Daddy! Want one.” Abby’s chin wobbled - one of her tell tale signs that a meltdown was coming.

“Okay honey, I’ll get you one.” He smiled and moved her so that she was propped on his hip. They walked slowly around the yard together and Billy caught one for her. He helped her get it in her hand and her eyes widened. “Now you’ve got to be real careful, you don’t want to squish it right?” Abby shook her head no, wanting to keep her new friend forever. Billy watched the way she would peek into her fist to catch a glimpse of the small bug, finding it sweet how gentle she treated it. She kissed the top of her hand and said “I love you” to the tiny insect hidden within. Billy was so transfixed with her that he didn’t notice Steve’s arrival; It startled him when a hand met the small of his back. Abby lit up even more once she saw Steve.

“Papa look! Bug!” She opened up her hand to show Steve the bug, but the firefly took the opportunity to make its escape and flew off into the night sky before Abby could close her hand. She gasped and tried to reach for it in a futile attempt. Here comes the meltdown... or so Billy thought.

“Oh Abby, it was such a beautiful firefly! Looked like it was a really good flyer too huh?” Steve smiled and Abby only pouted a little. “Now it’s going to go home and tell all of its friends about you. And we gotta go home too sweetheart, it’s getting pretty late. Let’s say bye to Julien and Aunt Max, okay?” Steve was great at de-escalating a situation, he always knew exactly the right thing to say to stop Abby’s tears. Billy put Abby back down on her feet so that she could go over to Max and Julian to say goodbye. Steve turned to Billy and gave him a quick peck on the lips before taking his hand and walking them over to the trio waiting for them.

“Seems like you were able to get out of your head today, I’m glad.” Max said to Billy during their hug.

Once their farewells were said and done and they were all loaded up into Steve’s car, the small family made the short drive back home. Steve’s hand rested over Billy’s atop his thigh, periodically giving it a light, reassuring squeeze.

Back home, Steve carried a sleepy Abby in from the car and straight to her bed (he hated for her to miss brushing her teeth, but made an exception because of the long day she had had). While Steve helped Abby get settled in, Billy headed into their bedroom. He picked one of the heavier hardcover books off the bookshelf and pulled the dandelion out of his pocket. He tucked the wilting flower between the pages, saving it so that he could remember the day. Steve came into the bedroom as he was reshelving the book, he walked straight

to Billy and wrapped his arms around him.

“Had a good day?” Steve asked. Billy twisted in his grip, turning to face Steve. They shared a few slow kisses, with no intention to escalate, only to be in each other’s space after being apart for the day. Billy pulled back, hands still holding onto Steve’s waist securely.

“Yeah, it was really good.” He smiled. Sure Abby was growing up, but they had so many years ahead of them, so many warm summer days just like this one. Although Billy didn’t expect he could completely quell his anxieties about the future, he was ready to start enjoying the moments as they happened.